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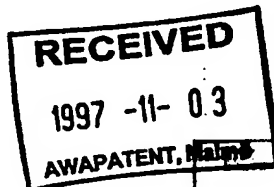
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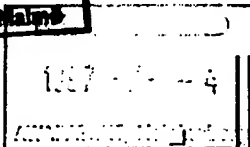


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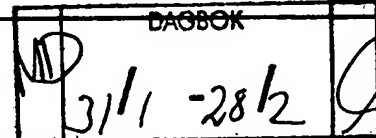
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Application No. 94 915 725.9-2303	Ref. 2950767	Date 31.10.97
Applicant VALINGE ALUMINIUM AB		



Communication pursuant to Article 96(2) and Rule 51(2) EPC

The examination of the above-identified application has revealed that it does not meet the requirements of the European Patent Convention for the reasons enclosed herewith. If the deficiencies indicated are not rectified the application may be refused pursuant to Article 97(1) EPC.

You are invited to file your observations and insofar as the deficiencies are such as to be rectifiable, to correct the indicated deficiencies within a period

of 4 months

from the notification of this communication, this period being computed in accordance with Rules 78(3) and 83(2) and (4) EPC.

Amendments to the description, claims and drawings are to be filed where appropriate within the said period in three copies on separate sheets (Rule 36(1) EPC).

Failure to comply with this invitation in due time will result in the application being deemed to be withdrawn (Article 96(3) EPC).



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PLUGGE H B  
Primary Examiner  
for the Examining Division

Enclosure(s): 2 page/s reasons (Form 2906)



Beschold/Protokoll (Anlage)

Communication/Minutes (Annex)

Notification/Procès-verbal (Annexe)

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31.10.97

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Anmelde-Nr.:  
Application No.:  
Demande n°: 94 915 725.9

The examination is being carried out on the following application documents:

Text for the Contracting States:

AT BE CH LI DE DK ES FR GB GR IE IT LU MC NL PT SE

Description, pages:

1-19 as published

Claims, No.:

1-20 as received on 01.07.1997 with letter of 26.06.1997

Drawings, sheets:

1-6 as published

Comments:

\* Main request; and claims 1 to 20 of secondary request

1. The amendments filed with the letter dated 26.06.1997 introduce subject-matter which extends beyond the content of the application as filed, contrary to Article 123(2) EPC. The amendment concerned is the deletion of an essential feature of claim 1.

In the originally filed claim 1, it was stated that the panels, when joined together, have play so as to be able to occupy a relative position in the "second" direction.

This feature characterised claim 1 over the closest prior art, SE-A-450 141.

The deletion of this feature contravenes Article 123(2) EPC, as there is no disclosure in the originally filed application that this feature is not an essential feature. It is consistently presented as an essential feature.

Furthermore, by deleting this feature, the subject matter of claim 1 appears to no longer support an inventive step.

Claim 1, according to the primary request, is differentiated from said closest prior art simply in that the strip extends "throughout substantially the entire length of the



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Communication/Minutes (Annex)

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Notification/Procès-verbal (Annexe)

Anmelde-Nr.:  
Application No.:  
Demande n°:

94 915 725.9

joint edge".

Such a feature must be considered banal. The skilled man is familiar with fastening systems. The provision of strip fasteners is generally known, with established advantages over discontinuous fasteners (or point fasteners), and he would as a matter of course replace a point fastener with a longitudinally extending fastener where necessary.

For the above reasons, claim 1 of the primary request is not allowable.

2. The insertion of new claim 14 does not appear to present any conflict with Article 123(2) of the EPC, as there is support in the originally filing for the subject matter described therein.
3. The set of claims according to the secondary request appear to meet the requirements for patentability. However, although claim 1 is drafted in the two-part form, many of the features in the characterising portion are disclosed in document SE-A-450 141 in combination with the features disclosed in the preamble.

These features should be transferred from the characterising portion of the claim to the preamble.

In particular the following feature need to transferred to the preamble:

- The entire first paragraph of the characterising portion - except for the statement that "said strip extends throughout substantially the entire length of the panel,
  - The last two paragraphs of the characterising portion of claim 1.
4. The applicant is requested to file amended claims as set out above, based on the secondary request. When these have been received the application can proceed to grant.